LEARNING THE RULES OF MUAY THAI

Alexandre **Breck**

Muay Thai Competition Ring Regulations

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Alexandre Breck is an enthusiast and a deep connoisseur of Muay Thai, with years dedicated to studying and practicing this combat sport. With engaging and informative writing, he transforms technical concepts into accessible content without neglecting the philosophical and historical essence that shapes Muay Thai. His passion for the sport shines through on every page, inviting readers to understand and appreciate all aspects of this ancient practice.

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PREFACE

Muaythai is a combat sport deeply rooted in Thai culture, a legacy passed down from generation to generation that has transcended borders to become one of the most practiced and admired sports in the world. With origins steeped in history and tradition, this discipline is not just a physical activity but also a cultural and spiritual expression, recognized for its techniques, discipline, and mutual respect.

The global expansion of Muaythai has brought new challenges, particularly regarding the standardization of rules and the management of competitive events. To ensure the sport's integrity and promote a safe and fair environment for everyone involved – athletes, trainers, referees, and spectators – the establishment of uniform regulations has become essential. In this context, the "Manual of Rules and Regulations for Muaythai," developed under the guidance of the Sports Authority of Thailand, serves as a comprehensive guide for the development and implementation of best practices in the discipline.

This book, inspired by official guidelines, not only presents the technical and organizational rules of Muaythai but also emphasizes the importance of values such as ethics, safety, and respect. It is an essential resource for anyone who wishes to understand the intricacies of this sport – whether as a practitioner, organizer, or enthusiast.

We invite you, the reader, to embark on this journey of learning, exploring the balance between tradition and modernity that makes Muaythai such a unique cultural and athletic heritage. May this book serve as a bridge to the appreciation and understanding of Muaythai, fostering its practice with excellence and passion.

Enjoy your reading!

INTRODUCTION

Muaythai, widely known as the "Art of Eight Limbs," is more than just a combat sport – it is a living symbol of Thai culture, history, and identity. This book was created to celebrate this rich tradition and provide a comprehensive guide for anyone seeking to understand the rules and regulations that shape Muaythai in the competitive arena.

With Muaythai's growing popularity worldwide, it has become essential to standardize regulations and ensure competitions are conducted with fairness, safety, and respect for tradition. This volume, based on the official guidelines of the Sports Authority of Thailand, is an indispensable resource for athletes, coaches, referees, organizers, and enthusiasts looking to deepen their understanding and practice of this sport.

Within these pages, you will find a detailed explanation of the rules governing Muaythai, from technical specifications for the ring and equipment to regulations for referees, judges, and fighters. The book also covers critical aspects such as athlete safety, weight divisions, scoring criteria, and sanctions for rule violations.

This work is more than just a technical manual; it is an invitation to immerse yourself in the essence of Muaythai, appreciating the profound connection between its traditions and its modern evolution. Practicing this sport responsibly and respectfully is essential to preserving its value as a cultural and athletic heritage.

We invite you to explore these pages with the same spirit of discipline, respect, and passion that defines Muaythai. May this book serve as a guide and an inspiration for all who share a love for this extraordinary sport.

Sawadee!

THE RING AND THE STAGE

In Muay Thai competitions, the ring and stage are constructed and regulated with precision to ensure the safety of the competitors and the fairness of the competition. The ring must be built in a sturdy, secure, and level manner, free of obstacles. The ring floor must extend at least 90 centimeters beyond the ring ropes. The height of the ring floor should be between 1.20 meters and 1.50 meters from the ground. At each of the four corners of the ring, a post with a diameter of 10 to 12.5 centimeters and a maximum height of 2.85 meters must be installed.

The ring floor must be covered with soft materials such as rubber, soft fabric pieces, sponge, or similar materials, with a thickness of 2.50 to 3.75 centimeters. A canvas tarp must be stretched and securely fastened over the entire ring area.

The ring's position should be such that the red corner is to the left of the ring officials' table, while the blue corner is directly opposite the red corner. The other two corners are referred to as neutral corners. The ring is enclosed by four ropes, with a diameter of 3 to 5 centimeters, which must be covered with soft and safe materials. The ropes should be firmly attached to the four ring posts at four different heights: 45 centimeters, 75 centimeters, 1.05 meters, and 1.35 meters from the top of the ring floor.

The ropes on each side must be kept in place by two pieces of strong fabric, 3 to 4 centimeters wide, with equal spacing between them, which must be tightly tied.

Each of the four corners must be protected with cushions or other appropriate materials to prevent injury to the fighters. Additionally, there must be a ladder in both the red and blue corners to allow fighters, their seconds, the referee, and the doctor to enter and exit the ring easily.

Furthermore, in both neutral corners, outside the ring, two plastic boxes or other materials must be provided, one in each corner, for the referee to discard materials, such as cotton, used during the competition.

The stage is a part of the ring, being a square area with dimensions of 6.00 x 6.00 meters for small-sized competitions and 6.50 x 6.50 meters for large-sized competitions, measured from the inner edge of the ring ropes.

RING EQUIPMENT FOR COMPETITIONS

The preparation of the competition ring is a crucial element in ensuring the safety and order of the bouts, providing the necessary tools and support for athletes, referees, and support teams to perform their duties effectively.

RING
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In this chapter, we will detail each item required for setting up a ring according to international standards for Muay Thai and boxing competitions.

Chairs for the Fighters: Each corner of the ring should be equipped with a chair or stool where the fighters can rest during the breaks between rounds. These chairs are designed to provide a quick and effective rest, aiding the fighters' physical recovery.

Broom and Towels for the Ring Floor: It is essential to keep the ring dry and clean to prevent slipping that could lead to injuries. A broom is used to quickly dry the floor, while two foot towels are available for the fighters to clean their feet before entering the ring, ensuring a safe and clean surface.

Water Bottles and Sprayers: Each team must have access to two water bottles for hydration and two sprayers to cool and refresh the fighters during the breaks.

Towels: Two towels are essential for each fighter, allowing the technical team to wipe away sweat, attend to any bleeding, and assist in the athlete's recovery during the breaks.

Buckets of Water: Two buckets of water are necessary, serving both for hygiene and to cool down the fighters. In intense competitions, these buckets allow the teams to quickly address the needs of their athletes.

Table and Chair for Officials: A table and chair should be readily available for officials, such as judges and referees, allowing them to track and record scores and manage the bout in an organized and efficient manner.

Bell: The bell is one of the most traditional and essential elements in competitions, used to signal the start and end of each round. Its clear and distinct sound is crucial for marking the fight's time and ensuring accurate transitions between rounds.

Stopwatches: One or two stopwatches should be present to accurately time the duration of each round and break. The stopwatches are essential to ensure fairness and equality in each competition.

Scorecards: Scorecards are tools used by judges to record each fighter's score. Every point and technical assessment is marked on the scorecards so that, at the end of the bout, the scores can be reviewed and the winner announced.

Locked Box for Scorecards: A locked box for storing the scorecards ensures the security and confidentiality of the judges' evaluations until the end of the bout.

Round, Time, and Fight Indicators: A set of round, time, and fight markers is used to keep all involved parties informed about the current phase of the fight, allowing for clear organization for the team and spectators.

Boxing Gloves: Two pairs of boxing gloves, one for each fighter, are essential for protection and compliance with competition standards. The gloves help cushion the impacts, reducing the risk of serious injuries for both the attacker and the defender.

Fighter Shorts: Each fighter must wear specific shorts, one red and one blue, to make identification easier for judges, commentators, and the audience.

Protective Cups: Two protective cups, also known as "cups," are essential to protect the genital area of the fighters. These are mandatory to prevent serious injuries to this vulnerable region.

Privacy Screens: If necessary, such as for adjusting a protective cup or if a fighter's shorts shift, two privacy screens are used to preserve the dignity and professionalism of the athletes during the event.

Stretcher: A stretcher must be available to safely and carefully remove any injured fighter from the ring in the event of an emergency.

Safety Scissors: A pair of safety scissors is essential for quickly removing bandages, gloves, or other accessories in case of a medical emergency, facilitating prompt care for the fighter.

Other Essential Equipment: Additional items such as amplifiers, microphones, and sound systems are necessary to ensure the referee and event organizers can make clear announcements and keep the audience informed about the progress of the competition.

This set of equipment is essential for the smooth operation of any combat competition, not only to ensure the safety and integrity of the fighters but also to create a controlled and professional environment that allows the focus to be solely on the athletes' skills.

GLOVE

Gloves are one of the most essential pieces of equipment for fighters in boxing and Muay Thai competitions, not only to protect the hands of the person throwing the punches but also to minimize the impact on opponents, ensuring a safer and fairer fight. Below, we outline the regulations and technical specifications for competition gloves, according to official standards and rules.

Material and Weight of Gloves

The gloves used in competitions must have an outer layer made of leather, with a weight that does not exceed half of the total weight of the glove. The internal padding must account for at least half of the glove's total weight. Altering the internal padding's shape or manipulating it in any way to avoid distortion from the original design is prohibited. This rule ensures the consistency of the protection provided by the glove and maintains the integrity of the equipment during the competition.

Certification of Gloves

Fighters may only use gloves certified by the Boxing Sports Council, in compliance with official regulations. The gloves must be supplied by the stadium manager or the fight promoter.

This measure aims to ensure that all fighters use standardized equipment in good condition, eliminating any potential advantage gained from alterations or the use of inferior quality gear.

Glove Sizes for Competitions

Gloves vary in size according to the fighters' weight divisions, providing appropriate protection for each category. The specifications for glove usage in the different categories are as follows:

Fighters between the Mini Flyweight and Featherweight divisions must use gloves weighing six (6) ounces, equivalent to approximately 132 grams.

Fighters between the Super Featherweight and Welterweight divisions must use gloves weighing eight (8) ounces, or about 227 grams.

Fighters in the Super Welterweight division and above must use gloves weighing ten (10) ounces, equivalent to approximately 284 grams.

These variations in size and weight ensure that the equipment matches the strength and protection required for each weight category, maintaining the safety of both the fighter and the opponent.

Glove Tying and Inspection

The gloves must be tied with laces securely fastened with knots at the back of the wrists. Before each fight, the fighters' gloves undergo a thorough inspection by authorized inspectors, who ensure that the lacing process and the use of the gloves comply with regulatory standards. Inspectors continue to monitor the use of the gloves until the fighters enter the ring, ensuring that the equipment remains secure and suitable throughout the entire preparation.

These guidelines for the use of gloves in competitions are established to maintain safety and integrity in the sport, allowing fighters to demonstrate their skills fairly while minimizing the risk of injury. The standardization of gloves, in terms of size, weight, and material, aims to ensure fairness in competitions and strengthen respect for safety regulations and professional conduct.

HAND BANDAGES

Hand Bandages

Hand bandages play a vital role in protecting a fighter's hands during boxing and Muay Thai competitions. They not only provide support to the bones and joints during strikes but also minimize the risk of injuries to the hands and wrists, which are among the most vulnerable parts of the body during a fight. This chapter outlines the regulations regarding the use of hand bandages, ensuring compliance with official competition standards.

Dimensions and Material of Bandages

In competitions, fighters are required to wrap their hands with soft bandages. The bandages used must not exceed six (6) meters in length and five (5) centimeters in width for each hand. These specifications aim to limit the amount of material used, ensuring that the hands are protected without the possibility of any unfair advantage gained from an additional layer of protection that could impact the power and effectiveness of the strikes.

Use of Adhesive Tapes

Fighters may use adhesive tapes, such as rubber tape or plaster tape, to reinforce the wrist or the back of the hand. These tapes are typically applied in small quantities, ensuring that they enhance protection without creating an unfair advantage.

The use of adhesive tapes must also comply with the competition rules, ensuring that they do not alter the intended protection provided by the hand bandages.

These regulations help maintain fairness in competition, ensuring that all fighters use appropriate hand protection that meets the standards for safety and performance.

Adhesive Tape Restrictions

However, adhesive tapes must follow the following restrictions: they cannot exceed two and a half meters (2.5) in length and two and a half centimeters (2.5) in width for each hand. It is strictly prohibited to apply tape over the knuckles, as this could harden the area and create a potentially dangerous impact for the opponent.

Provision of Bandages

The hand bandages used in competitions must be provided exclusively by the stadium manager or the fight promoter. This ensures that all fighters use materials of similar quality, in compliance with safety regulations, preventing any advantage or disadvantage that could arise from the use of external or modified bandages.

Inspection of Bandages

Before the fighters put on their gloves, the hand bandages must be inspected by an authorized official, who will check if they comply with the standards. After the inspection, the official will place a certification stamp on the bandages, indicating that they have been approved. This process ensures that all bandages meet safety standards, preventing any fighter from entering the ring with bandages that provide inadequate support or that could be potentially dangerous to the opponent.

These guidelines for the use of hand bandages in competitions are essential to maintaining the safety and integrity of the fights, ensuring that fighters receive the necessary protection while upholding respect for the rules and promoting fair competition. The standardization of bandages reflects the sport's commitment to safety and fairness at all levels of competition.

UNIFORMES

Fighter Uniforms

The uniforms worn by fighters play a crucial role not only in identification during competitions but also in maintaining safety, discipline, and tradition within the sport. This chapter outlines the rules and regulations regarding the permitted uniforms and accessories for fighters, with an emphasis on protection, respect for the rules, and the integrity of the event.

Fighter Attire

Fighters must wear shorts that do not extend above mid-thigh, in an orderly manner and without shirts or shoes. The "red corner" fighter may choose shorts in the colors red, pink, brown, or white, while the "blue corner" fighter may select shorts in the colors blue, navy blue, or black. These color choices help clearly distinguish the competitors during the fight, following an important tradition in various combat sports.

Genital Protection

Each fighter must wear a genital protector or protective cover capable of absorbing the impact of strikes such as punches or knee strikes. The protector should be made of strong and durable material.

The Protector

The genital protector is securely fastened with a quick knot at the back, and its edges should be well-covered, ensuring there is no risk of displacement or discomfort during the fight.

Hair and Beard

Fighters are not allowed to have long, messy hair or beards that could interfere with the fight. They may wear a mustache, but it should not be long enough to cover the lips. This rule ensures that the fighter has good visibility and that no hair accessory interferes with their movements or poses a risk during the competition.

Cut Nails

The nails on both the hands and feet of fighters must be trimmed short and well-maintained. Long or poorly cut nails can cause injuries to both the opponent and the fighter themselves, in addition to posing a risk of bruising.

Accessories and Amulets

Fighters may wear a sacred headband only during the pre-fight tribute, but not during the combat.

During the fight, the fighter may wear a cloth with inscriptions, an amulet, or a talisman, as long as they are securely fastened to the upper arm or around the waist and wrapped in fabric to prevent any damage or distraction. These accessories hold symbolic and spiritual value but must be carefully fixed so they do not interfere with the fight.

Ankle Supports

Fighters may use ankle supports, one for each foot, but these supports should not be confused with shin supports or wrapped improperly. It is not allowed to wrap the ankles or legs with pieces of fabric, as this could alter mobility and pose a risk of injury.

Prohibition of Dangerous Belts and Adornments

Fighters are prohibited from wearing belts or adornments that may be dangerous during the fight. Items such as chains, rings, or other metal accessories can cause accidental injuries during the combat, and therefore, they are strictly prohibited.

Prohibition of Greasy and Medicinal Products

It is prohibited to apply petroleum jelly, ointments, balms, or any type of greasy or herbal cream on the body or gloves of the fighters.

These products can alter the grip of the gloves, making the punches less controllable or creating unfair conditions for the fight.

Mouthguards

The use of mouthguards is mandatory for both fighters. The mouthguard helps reduce the risk of injuries to the teeth, jaw, and other sensitive areas of the mouth, protecting the fighter's integrity during strikes.

Violation of Dress Code Rules

If a fighter's uniform does not comply with the established rules, the referee has the authority to order the fighter to correct any mistake before the fight begins. During the fight, if the referee notices that the gloves or uniform are dirty or poorly fitted, they will stop the action to correct the issue, ensuring that the match adheres to safety and discipline standards.

The standardization and regulation of the fighter's uniform and accessories not only aim for the safety and comfort of the competitors but also maintain respect for the traditions of the sport. Additionally, the rules ensure that the fight takes place fairly, with each fighter presenting themselves appropriately and without elements that could jeopardize the physical integrity of the participants or alter the dynamics of the match.

AGE, WEIGHT DIVISIONS, AND WEIGH-IN

In the world of martial arts, strict control over age and weight categories is essential to ensure the safety and fairness of competitions. In Muay Thai, these aspects are treated with great seriousness.

Minimum Age: To compete under the official rules, fighters must be at least 18 years old. This rule ensures that athletes are physically mature enough to face the challenges of competitive fighting, minimizing the risks of serious injuries.

Weight Requirements: Fighters must weigh at least 100 pounds (approximately 45.36 kg) to be eligible for competition. Additionally, when competing, the weight difference between opponents cannot exceed five pounds (2.27 kg). This ensures a balanced competition where no fighter has a significant advantage due to weight.

Weight Classes: The weight classes in Muay Thai are carefully defined to accommodate fighters of different sizes and weights. The categories are organized according to the table below:

CLASS	POUNDS	KILOGRAMS
MINI FLY WEIGHT	105	47.62
LIGHT-FLY WEIGHT	108	48.99
FLY WEIGHT	112	50.80
SUPER FLY WEIGHT	115	52.16
BANTAM WEIGHT	118	53.52
SUPER BANTAM WEIGHT	122	55.34
FEATHER WEIGHT	126	57.15
SUPER FEATHER WEIGHT	130	58.97
LIGHT WEIGHT	135	61.24
SUPER LIGHT WEIGHT	140	63.50
WELTER WEIGHT	147	66.68
SUPER WELTER WEIGHT	154	69.85
MIDDLE WEIGHT	160	72.58
SUPER MIDDLE WEIGHT	168	76.20
LIGHT HEAVY WEIGHT	175	79.38
SUPER LIGHT HEAVY WEIGHT	182	82.55
CRUISER WEIGHT	190	86.18
HEAVY WEIGHT	209	95.00
SUPER HEAVY WEIGHT	209+	95.00+

These divisions help ensure that fighters with similar strength and size face each other in the ring, promoting fair competition.

Weigh-In: Weigh-in procedures are strict and aim to ensure the physical integrity of the fighters. They must be weighed without clothes, no more than 24 hours before the fight. This time frame allows athletes to have proper preparation after the weigh-in and be in the best physical condition for the bout.

Before the weigh-in, all fighters undergo a physical examination conducted by a doctor to certify that they are fit to compete. Additionally, the fighters' managers or their representatives can witness the weigh-in process, ensuring transparency and compliance with the rules.
This set of regulations not only preserves the safety of the fighters but also maintains the sportsmanship of Muay Thai, ensuring that each match is contested fairly and honestly.

TRIBUTE TO THE MASTERS

Muay Thai, in addition to being a martial art filled with powerful techniques, is also a cultural manifestation deeply rooted in values such as respect, gratitude, and tradition. This essence is captured in Rule 7: Paying Tribute to the Masters, which requires every fighter to perform a ritual before each fight, paying homage to those who came before them.

The Ritual of Paying Tribute to the Masters

Before fists exchange blows and bodies engage in battle, each fighter must perform the Wai Khru Ram Muay, a mandatory and symbolic tribute ritual. This act goes beyond simply showing respect to trainers. It is an expression of gratitude to the generations of masters who have preserved and passed on the knowledge of Muay Thai over the centuries.

The performance takes place to the sound of traditional music, which is more than just an accompaniment: it is the soul that connects the fighter to their history and spirituality. The instruments used are carefully chosen to create an atmosphere that elevates the ceremony. Among them are:

The **Pi Java**, a Javanese oboe, whose distinctive melody guides the rhythm and movements of the fighters.

The **Klong Khaek**, a deep-toned and resonant drum that evokes strength and solemnity.

The **Ching**, small cymbals shaped like cups, which add precision and rhythm to the atmosphere.

Together, these sounds create a spiritual symphony that transcends the arena and connects everyone present – fighters, spectators, and masters – to the living legacy of Muay Thai.

Meaning and Structure of the Wai Khru Ram Muay

Each movement of the Wai Khru is meticulously rehearsed, laden with symbolism, and often personalized by each fighter or gym. Some steps may represent deference to the masters, others simulate preparation for battle, and there are even gestures that symbolize spiritual protection or homage to deities.
The Wai Khru also serves as an active meditation. It helps the fighter focus, warm up the body, and establish a disciplined mindset before the confrontation. Furthermore, it shows the spectators that Muay Thai is not merely an exchange of blows, but an art that demands humility, respect, and self-mastery.

The Beginning of the Fight

Only after the completion of the Wai Khru Ram Muay and with the referee's consent does the fight begin. This interval between the ritual and the battle offers a moment of transition – from the spiritual to the physical, from respect to competition.

No matter how fierce the clash becomes, the Wai Khru remains as a reminder that Muay Thai is more than just a sport: it is a tradition that honors the masters, celebrates Thai culture, and strengthens the human spirit.

STRUCTURE OF ROUNDS IN MUAY THAI COMPETITIONS

In Muay Thai, the fight is not just a test of physical strength, but also a trial of endurance, strategy, and discipline. To ensure that the bouts are fair and well-organized, the rules governing the structure of the rounds are strictly followed. These rules not only set the pace of the competition but also ensure that the balance between the fighters is maintained from start to finish.

The Structure of the Rounds

Each professional Muay Thai fight consists of five (5) rounds, each lasting three (3) minutes. Between the rounds, there is a two (2) minute break for rest, giving the fighters the opportunity to catch their breath, reassess strategies, and receive instructions from their trainers.

This time structure was developed to balance intensity and endurance. The three minutes of maximum action in each round challenge the fighter's physique, while the rest in between allows for brief recovery, which is essential for maintaining technical performance and focus throughout the fight.

Time Stoppages

In specific situations, the fight's clock is paused to ensure that no fighter is unfairly impacted and that the integrity of the match is maintained. Some of the situations that result in a time stoppage include:

Referee Warnings: When the referee halts the fight to correct improper conduct or give instructions.

Point Deductions: If a fighter commits a serious infraction, the referee may stop the fight to communicate the penalty.

Clothing Adjustments: Necessary adjustments to the fighters' attire or equipment, such as gloves, bandages, or shorts.

Other Reasons: Unforeseen circumstances, such as cleaning the ring or checking safety measures, may also lead to a time stoppage.

These stoppages do not count towards the official round time, ensuring that each fighter has the same amount of effective time to demonstrate their skills and strategies.

The Importance of Time Management

Managing the rounds and intervals is a crucial strategic element in Muay Thai. During the three minutes of combat, the fighter must balance offense and defense, adjusting their approach according to the intensity of the fight. In the two-minute break, the athlete needs to recover as much energy as possible while listening attentively to their team's advice.

The ability to manage the pace during the rounds is often what separates an average fighter from a champion. Strategy is not only about strength and technique, but also about knowing when to press the attack, when to retreat, and how to use time to their advantage.

QUALIFICATIONS AND RESTRICTIONS FOR FIGHTERS

Muay Thai, as both a sport and a martial art, requires its practitioners to meet strict criteria to ensure the physical integrity of the fighters and the fairness of the competitions. The rules regarding the qualifications and restrictions of fighters establish clear standards to protect the health of participants and maintain the sport as safe and fair for all.

Minimum Age

To officially compete, a fighter must be at least 15 years old. This rule is crucial to ensure that the participant has sufficient physical and mental maturity to face the demands of a Muay Thai fight. Although younger children and adolescents often train and even participate in amateur fights in some regions, the minimum age for official competitions is set to protect fighters during a critical stage of their physical development. Muay Thai is an intense contact sport, and ensuring the safety of athletes in training is an absolute priority.

Minimum Weight

In addition to age, fighters must weigh at least 100 pounds (45.4 kg) to be eligible for competition. This requirement reflects the need to preserve safety and competitiveness, as fighters who are too light may be more susceptible to serious injuries when facing opponents of similar or greater weight.
Weight management is a common practice in Muay Thai and is rigorously monitored before each fight. Official weigh-ins are conducted to ensure athletes are within their weight class and meet the minimum requirement.

Health Conditions and Prohibited Diseases

To participate in a fight, the fighter must not have any medical condition or prohibited disease, as specified in the competition's medical manual. This guideline ensures that all athletes are in good physical condition and do not pose a risk to their own health or the health of their opponent.

The medical exams conducted before a fight include detailed assessments such as:

Tests for infectious or chronic diseases: Ensuring that fighters do not have conditions that could compromise their health or the health of others during the match.
Check for existing injuries: Identifying fractures, cuts, or other injuries that could be aggravated during combat.
General health evaluation: Assessing conditions related to heart, lungs, and neurological health.
If a fighter is found unfit, they are immediately disqualified, and the fight does not take place.

The Importance of Qualifications and Restrictions

These rules reflect Muay Thai's commitment to the well-being of its athletes. By establishing minimum standards for age, weight, and health, the sport strengthens its focus on safety and ensuring fair competitions.
The balance between martial tradition and modern safety practices is one of the reasons Muay Thai continues to be a respected discipline globally. Adhering to these rules not only protects the fighters but also upholds the integrity and reputation of the sport.

COACHES AND THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES IN MUAY THAI

In the world of Muay Thai, coaches, known as "seconds," play an indispensable role during competitions. More than just assistants, they are the direct link between the fighter and their strategy, as well as the guardians of the athlete's safety and well-being. The work of the coaches is governed by specific rules that ensure the integrity of the fight and order in the corner, contributing to the sport's success and credibility.

In general competitions, each fighter is allowed two coaches. In championship bouts, this number increases to three, although only two may enter the ring during the breaks between rounds. Before the fight begins, the referee must be informed of who will be the head coach and the assistant, ensuring clear communication and preventing confusion.

During the fight, coaches must remain seated in their designated spots, watching the match closely but without interference. It is forbidden for them to give advice or verbally encourage the fighters while the round is in progress. If this occurs, the referee may issue warnings, apply formal reprimands, or even remove the coach from their duties. Discipline is one of the cornerstones of Muay Thai, and this rule reflects respect for the competition and for the athletes.

During the breaks between rounds, coaches play a crucial role. They must prepare the fighter for the next round by checking the condition of their clothing and equipment. Any irregularities should be reported to the referee immediately. Additionally, the application of water to the fighter must be done carefully to avoid wetting the ring floor, as this can lead to accidents. After hydrating the fighter, the coach must also dry them with towels, ensuring they are ready to return to the fight.

The conduct of the coaches is equally important. They must behave respectfully throughout the competition, avoiding the use of rude language or aggressive behavior, whether towards the referee, the opponent, or even the fighter themselves. Muay Thai is an art that values honor, and coaches should be examples of this virtue.

To properly identify themselves, coaches must wear uniforms or clothing with their gym's symbols and carry badges or identification to confirm their official position. This standardization ensures organization and facilitates communication among all parties involved in the competition.

The materials that coaches can use in the corner are also clearly defined. These include essential items such as water, ice, towels, gauze, cotton swabs, safety scissors, and bandages.

Additionally, medical substances, such as adrenaline in a 1/1000 solution, may be used, provided they are approved by the ring doctor. These materials are essential for treating minor injuries, controlling bleeding, and ensuring that the fighter is fit to continue the fight safely.

If at any point the head coach realizes that the fighter is not fit to continue, they may stop the fight by entering the ring. However, it is not allowed to throw a towel or sponge as a signal of surrender, a common practice in other sports but not accepted in Muay Thai. This rule emphasizes the need for clear and responsible communication with the referee.

The role of coaches in Muay Thai goes beyond technique and physical support. They are an extension of the values that define the martial art: discipline, respect, and commitment to the athlete's well-being. Their actions both inside and outside the ring directly influence the quality of the fight and the preservation of the essence of the sport, ensuring that each match is a fair and honorable celebration of the tradition of Muay Thai.

THE ROLE OF SECONDS IN MUAY THAI

In Muay Thai competitions, seconds play an essential role in supporting the fighters, ensuring they are prepared and safe throughout the entire fight. The rule establishes guidelines for the allowed number of seconds, their specific duties, and their expected behavior during the fight.

In general competitions, each fighter can have up to two (2) seconds. Before the start of the fight, it is mandatory to inform the referee who the head cornerman will be and who the assistant will be. In championship matches, a fighter can have up to three (3) seconds, but only two (2) are permitted to enter the ring during the intervals between rounds. The seconds have specific duties that must be strictly followed to ensure the smooth progress of the fight. They cannot give advice or verbally encourage the fighter during the fight. If they violate this rule, the referee may warn them, apply a penalty, or even remove them from their duties. During the fight, the seconds must remain seated in their designated places, and at the end of each round, they must remove towels, water bottles, and other materials from the edges of the ring.

During the interval between rounds, it is the responsibility of the seconds to check the fighter's clothing and equipment, ensuring everything is in order for the next round.

If any issues are detected, the seconds must immediately inform the referee so that it can be resolved before the next round of the fight begins. When applying water to the fighter, it is crucial that the seconds avoid wetting the ring floor, drying the fighter with a towel to prevent accidents.

The behavior of the seconds must always be exemplary. They are not allowed to use offensive language or, under any circumstances, harm the fighter, either during the fight or after the bout. They are also required to wear uniforms or clothing that represent their gym in a respectable manner, displaying badges or identification that qualify them as seconds.

Each corner can organize its own materials, equipment, and medical supplies as permitted. Authorized items include water, ice, towels, adrenaline solution 1/1000 (or other substances approved by the ring doctor), gauze, cotton swabs, bandages for wounds, absorbent bandages, and safety scissors.

The head cornerman has the right to stop the fight on behalf of the fighter if he believes the fighter cannot continue. To do this, he must enter the ring and communicate the decision to the referee. However, it is not allowed to throw a towel or sponge into the ring as a sign of surrender.

The rule establishes clear and objective standards for the conduct of the seconds, ensuring that they perform their duties with professionalism and contribute to the safety and success of the fight, while always preserving the integrity of the fighter and the sportsmanship of the competition.

REFEREE

Referee play a crucial role in Muay Thai, responsible for ensuring the integrity of the fight, the safety of the fighters, and the strict enforcement of the rules. To carry out their duties, they must adhere to a standard of attire and behavior that reflects the seriousness of their position.

Referees must wear blue or black pants, light-colored shirts or sweaters, such as light blue, featuring the emblem of the Boxing Council on the right chest or the emblem of the corresponding stadium on the left chest pocket. In addition, they should wear lightweight boots and are not allowed to wear glasses or metallic ornaments. Their nails must be short and well-groomed, and long hair, unkempt beards, or mustaches that extend beyond the upper lip or corners of the mouth are not permitted.

The referee's duties are clear and straightforward. The absolute priority is to protect the more vulnerable fighter from unnecessary injuries. The referee is responsible for applying the rules fairly and controlling the fight closely, inspecting gloves, attire, and mouthguards before the fight begins. During the fight, the referee uses three main commands to guide the fighters.

The command "YUD" means stop; "YAK" orders the fighters to separate, requiring both to take at least one step back before re-engaging; and "CHOK" orders the resumption of the fight. If a fighter violates a rule, the referee must clearly signal the infraction and, in severe cases, disqualify the violator, notifying the Ring Officials' President after informing the spectators.

The referee must avoid actions that could harm the integrity of the fight, such as counting too quickly or too slowly, excessive warnings, or failing to issue any warnings. After the fight ends, the referee is responsible for collecting the scorecards from the three judges, pointing to the winner's corner based on the majority decision, and raising their hand. In the event of a tie, they will raise the hands of both fighters. The scorecards are then handed to the Ring Officials' President for review.

Referees are prohibited from criticizing or commenting on the results of past or future fights without the authorization of the Ring Officials' President.

Powers of the Referee

The referee has the authority to stop the fight in several situations. They may do so if they perceive one fighter to be dominating the other, if a fighter suffers severe injuries, or if the fighters intentionally delay the fight. In such cases, one or both fighters may be disqualified.

If the opposing fighter does not remain in the farthest neutral corner or leaves it before the count is completed, the referee may interrupt the count. The referee may also stop the fight to warn or penalize a fighter who violates the rules, ensuring the enforcement of justice and adherence to the regulations.

Fighters who disregard the referee's orders, assault or aggressively offend the referee may be immediately disqualified. Similarly, the referee may remove from the fight any second who disobeys the rules and may even disqualify the fighter if their second continues to disrespect the orders.

The referee has the power to disqualify fighters who commit serious rule violations or declare the fight "no decision" if the violations harm the integrity of the contest. The referee can also warn fighters before imposing more severe penalties, using clear hand signals to inform the judges about the infraction. If a fighter receives three warnings, they should be disqualified, or the fight declared "no decision." In cases of serious offenses, the referee can disqualify the fighter without prior warnings.

Procedure for Counting Fighters Outside the Ring

If a fighter is hit by legal strikes and falls outside the ring, the referee should order the second to immediately check the fighter's condition and help them return to the ring, ensuring they are fit to continue the fight. The referee will then begin the ten (10) second count as established, allowing time for the fighter to get back into the ring.

If the fighter fails to return within the time limit, they will be disqualified, or the fight will be declared "no decision.
If the opponent goes to the farthest neutral corner, the referee will immediately begin the count. The count continues up to “YISIP” or twenty. If the fighter returns to the ring before the count ends, the fight continues without loss of points.
If both fighters fall outside the ring, the referee begins the count. Any attempt to delay or obstruct the return to the ring will result in warnings or disqualification of the offender. If neither fighter manages to return to the ring before the count of twenty, the fight will be declared a draw.

Interpretation of the Rules

In situations not foreseen in the rules, the referee has the authority to interpret and apply the regulations based on the facts presented. Their decision must always prioritize the safety of the fighters, fairness in the fight, and the integrity of the sport.

JUDGE

In the technical and disciplined setting of professional Muay Thai, judges play a crucial role in determining the outcome of each fight. Governed by the Rule, these officials must operate with precision, impartiality, and respect for the established regulations. Judges must dress identically to referees, ensuring a professional and uniform appearance. The use of glasses is permitted, as long as they do not interfere with the execution of their duties. With three judges assigned to each fight, they are strategically positioned, one on each side of the ring, staying away from spectators to avoid distractions or external influences. During the fight, judges are prohibited from interacting with fighters, coaches, or anyone else, except in cases of absolute necessity. In such cases, communication must occur exclusively with the referee and only during the interval between rounds. Situations requiring this communication may include inappropriate behavior from seconds or structural issues with the ring, such as loose ropes.

Judges are responsible for evaluating the performance of fighters independently and in accordance with the rules of the sport. Their main tasks include deciding and recording scores independently on scorecards immediately after each round.

They must add up the points of both fighters, determine the winner, and sign the scorecards before handing them over to the referee. They must also remain in their positions until the referee declares the final result of the fight and refrain from public criticism or interviews regarding the results of future or past fights, unless they have express permission from the President of Referees and Judges.

Complementing the work of the judges, the President of Referees and Judges is responsible for overseeing their performance and ensuring the correct application of the rules. The President performs tasks such as assigning referees and judges to events, monitoring their performance, reviewing scorecards for accuracy, and reporting incidents to the boxing stadium manager. The President also provides guidance on important decisions and resolves issues that may arise during the competition.

The President has the authority to overturn the decisions of referees and judges in specific cases, such as when the referee's actions or decisions contradict the rules or when errors in the judges' score calculations lead to an incorrect result. These interventions are rare and must be based on factual evidence, reinforcing the integrity of the sport. The Rule precisely outlines the functions of the judges and the President of Referees and Judges, emphasizing the importance of impartiality, accuracy, and ethics in professional Muay Thai.

These standards are pillars that uphold the credibility of the sport, protecting its essence and ensuring that every decision is fair and transparent.

TIMEKEEPER AND ANNOUNCER

The timekeeper and the announcer play essential roles in ensuring the organized and transparent progression of a Muay Thai competition. Both are positioned beside the ring in designated seats and work in synchrony to support the referee, judges, and fighters, while keeping the spectators informed.

The timekeeper is responsible for monitoring the time during each round, rest intervals, and any interruptions ordered by the referee. Their main duties include maintaining strict time control with the aid of a stopwatch or clock, signaling the start and end of each round by sounding the gong, and alerting with a five-second warning to ensure the ring is clear before the start of each round. The timekeeper must also account for time deductions due to interruptions and pauses ordered by the referee and must never sound the gong while the referee is conducting a count, even if the round time has ended. In such cases, the gong should only be sounded after the referee's "CHOK" command, indicating the restart of the fight.

The announcer's role is to inform and engage the audience, ensuring that everyone is aware of the fight's details. They announce the names of the fighters, their gyms, corners, and weights when they enter the ring, and inform that the seconds must leave the ring upon hearing the timekeeper's signal and communicate the start and end of each round.

After the fight ends, the announcer announces the fighters' scores and declares the winner, according to the official decision of the judges and referee.
These two roles, although distinct, are complementary and essential for the smooth flow of the event. The timekeeper ensures that the scheduled times are adhered to with precision, while the announcer connects the audience to the unfolding of the competition. Their coordination is crucial for the success of the event and for preserving the spirit of Muay Thai in its most organized and professional form.

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DECISION

Decisions in a Muay Thai competition are crucial to determining the winner and ensuring that the result is fair and in accordance with the rules. A victory by points occurs when the fight ends without a knockout or interruption, with the fighter who receives the majority of the judges' votes being declared the winner. A victory by knockout (KO) is determined when a fighter knocks down their opponent, and the opponent is unable to continue the fight within the ten (10) second count performed by the referee. A victory by technical knockout (TKO) can occur in various situations: when a fighter clearly overpowers their opponent, putting them at risk of serious injury; when the opponent cannot continue the fight immediately after the break between rounds; when the opponent is seriously injured; when the opponent is counted more than twice in a single round or more than four times during the entire fight; when the opponent falls out of the ring and fails to return within the twenty (20) second count; or when the opponent voluntarily withdraws due to injuries or other reasons. A victory by disqualification occurs if the opponent severely violates the rules or fails to heed the referee's warnings. A victory by W.O. (Walkover) is declared if a fighter fails the medical examination, does not make weight for the category, or fails to show up for the fight as scheduled.

A draw can be declared if the majority decision of the judges is equal; if both fighters are knocked down and counted to ten (10) without getting up; if both fall out of the ring and are counted to twenty (20) without returning; or if both are seriously injured and unable to continue.
The referee may declare "No Decision" if it is deemed that one or both fighters are fighting dishonorably. If the fighters avoid fighting even after warnings and penalties, the fight will be declared "No Contest." Finally, the referee may cancel the fight in exceptional situations, such as damage to the ring, riots, or other circumstances that make it impossible for the match to continue, declaring "Fight Cancelled." These rules ensure that all decisions are made fairly, preserving the integrity of the sport and the safety of the competitors.

SCORING PROCEDURE

The scoring process in Muay Thai follows well-defined criteria to ensure fairness and accuracy in evaluation. Points are awarded based on the attacks performed by the fighters using the weapons of Muay Thai, such as fists, feet, knees, and elbows, in a powerful, precise, unprotected manner, and in accordance with the rules. The scoring takes into account several aspects: the fighter who performs the most attacks using Muay Thai weapons wins the round; the fighter who delivers the heaviest, most powerful, and clear attacks to the opponent wins the round; the fighter who causes the most damage to the opponent wins the round; the fighter who demonstrates more offensiveness and aggression in their attacks wins the round; the fighter who shows better offensive, defensive, evasive, or counter-attacking skills using the arts and techniques of Muay Thai wins the round; and the fighter who violates the fewest rules wins the round.

Criteria that do not score points include: attacks with Muay Thai weapons that violate the rules; attacks that hit the opponent's arms or legs as a form of defense; light attacks that lack sufficient force generated by body weight; situations where the fighter kicks the target but has their kicking leg caught and is taken down — the kick still counts, but if the fighter simulates a fall, they will be penalized; and opponent falls without the use of Muay Thai weapons.

The competition scoring system uses a ten-point scale. The winner of a round receives the maximum score of ten (10) points, while the opponent receives between nine (9) and seven (7) points, proportional to their performance. Fractions are not used. If the round is considered evenly contested, both fighters receive ten (10) points. In a clearly won round, the winner receives ten (10) points and the loser receives eight (8). If the loser is counted once in the round, the score is 10:8; if counted twice, the score can be 10:7 or, in clear cases, 10:6. Fighters who receive deductions cannot obtain the full ten (10) points for that round, with each warning from the referee costing one point.

This structured system ensures that the scoring reflects not only the technique and impact of the attacks but also the conduct and adherence to the rules by each fighter during the match.

SCORING PROCEDURE

In Muay Thai, the scoring system is a central element in determining the winner of a fight. It reflects not only the technical performance but also the ability to dominate the opponent with strength, precision, and control. The rules establish a detailed set of criteria and guidelines that referees must follow to ensure that the evaluation is fair and consistent with the principles of the sport.

The scoring considers various aspects of the fighters' offensive and defensive actions. To score, a fighter must use their combat weapons—fists, feet, knees, and elbows—in an effective manner, delivering clear and significant impact on the opponent. It is not enough to merely land a strike; it must be delivered with force, using the body weight to maximize the impact. Strikes that hit protected areas or lack sufficient force are not considered for scoring.

Moreover, the fighter's behavior in the ring is crucial. A fighter who adopts an offensive stance, actively seeking to dominate the fight, tends to be favored. However, defensive skills, such as blocks, evasions, and well-executed counterattacks, are also highly valued. The balance between offense and defense, combined with refined technique, indicates superiority in Muay Thai.

On the other hand, there are specific situations where actions are not scored. Strikes that violate the rules—such as attacks to prohibited areas of the body or improper use of techniques—are not counted. Similarly, light strikes that lack force generated by body weight are not considered. A particular situation occurs when a fighter kicks their opponent and has their kicking leg caught. If, in this context, the fighter intentionally falls to the ring floor, they are considered guilty of a rule violation. Throwing the opponent to the ground without using legitimate Muay Thai weapons, such as kicks or knees, is also not allowed and does not score points.

The scoring system uses a 10-point scale per round. The winner of the round receives 10 points, while their opponent receives a score proportional to their inferior performance, ranging from 9, 8, or, in extreme cases, 7 or 6 points. In balanced rounds, where both fighters demonstrate similar performances, each receives 10 points. Situations where a fighter is knocked down by a clear strike from the opponent can result in more significant point differences. For example, if a fighter is knocked down once in the round, they may receive 8 points, while their opponent receives 10. If the knockdown occurs twice, the loser may receive 7 or even 6 points, depending on the clarity of the opponent's dominance.

Warnings for rule violations also influence the scoring. Whenever a referee warns a fighter for an infraction, they may deduct one point from the fighter's total score for that round. Thus, even if a fighter has demonstrated technical dominance, repeated violations can harm their score.

This detailed scoring system ensures that the results are determined by technical effectiveness, strength, and adherence to the rules. It also preserves the fundamental values of Muay Thai, such as discipline, respect, and technical skill. By following these criteria, referees maintain the integrity of the sport, honoring its rich tradition and history.

RULE VIOLATIONS

In the world of Muay Thai, respect for the rules is the cornerstone that supports the fair, safe, and ethical practice of the sport. Violating these norms is not only a disrespect to the opponent, but also an affront to the essence of the martial tradition. The rules were created to preserve the physical integrity of the fighters, ensure the impartiality of the competitions, and maintain the sporting spirit. Below, we will explore in detail what constitutes a violation of the rules, the implications of such acts, and the applicable punishments.

One of the most serious infractions involves unethical acts, such as biting the opponent, intentionally striking the eyes, spitting, making provocative faces, or using headbutts. These actions are considered dishonorable, as they deviate from the spirit of technical combat focused on skill. The goal of Muay Thai is to allow the skill and training of each fighter to prevail, not behaviors that deliberately harm the other.

Similarly, the use of techniques that are not part of the traditional Muay Thai repertoire, such as throwing the opponent to the ground, breaking their back, or blocking their arms with judo or wrestling movements, is expressly prohibited. These moves are considered an affront to the technical identity of the sport and disrespect its traditions.

Another essential point is the ethical treatment of the opponent in vulnerable situations. Attacking a fighter while they are falling, down, or trying to get up is seen as a demonstration of disloyalty. These situations require that the opponent respect the recovery moment and wait for the fight to resume, as attacking in these conditions not only compromises physical safety but also disrespects sportsmanship.

Using the ropes for any type of advantage during the fight is also prohibited. Clinging to them to avoid falling, improve stability, or land strikes creates an unfair imbalance in the fight, and this practice goes against the essence of Muay Thai, which values technique, strength, and skill.

Another sanctioned behavior is the use of provocative words or gestures during the fight. Verbal or gestural provocations are not only unnecessary but also harm the image of mutual respect that Muay Thai seeks to promote. This is a sport where mental and emotional discipline is just as important as physical ability.

Disobeying the referee's instructions is a serious infraction, as the referee is the highest authority in the ring, responsible for ensuring the fighters' safety and the application of the rules. Ignoring their commands compromises the order of the fight and can lead to warnings, point deductions, or, in extreme cases, disqualification.

A specific violation that deserves attention is knee strikes to the groin protector. Deliberately or negligently striking the groin protector is a serious offense, as it can cause significant harm to the opponent. If the struck fighter is unable to continue, the referee may decide to disqualify the attacker or declare a "no decision." The struck fighter has the right to up to five minutes to recover, but if they cannot continue, the attacker may face severe penalties.

Holding the opponent's leg and taking more than two steps without delivering a strike is also a violation of the rules. This action is considered an attempt to manipulate the opponent's balance without using legitimate Muay Thai weapons, such as punches, kicks, elbows, or knees. After two warnings, points may be deducted.

Another important violation is faking a fall. When a fighter pretends to fall after having their leg caught by the opponent, they are attempting to deceive the referee to gain an unfair advantage. This behavior is seen as unsportsmanlike and can lead to warnings or point deductions in case of recurrence.

Furthermore, if both fighters fall out of the ring, any attempt to intentionally delay their return to the fight will be treated as a violation. This includes actions aimed at slowing down the resumption of the action to gain time or a strategic advantage.

Lastly, the use of prohibited substances, such as steroids or performance-enhancing drugs, is a serious violation of the rules and sports ethics. Fighters caught using banned substances face severe consequences, which can include disqualification, suspension, and damage to their reputation.

These rules reflect the seriousness and responsibility involved in Muay Thai. They are not only meant to create equal conditions but also to preserve the essence of the sport, where technique, skill, and respect are the fundamental pillars. Strict adherence to these rules ensures that Muay Thai remains not just a fight, but a true combat sport.

Unethical Behavior

Acts such as biting, striking the eyes, spitting at the opponent, making provocative faces, using headbutts, or hitting with inappropriate body parts are categorically prohibited. These actions not only jeopardize the opponent's safety but also disrespect the tradition of Muay Thai as a martial art.

Prohibited Techniques

The use of judo, wrestling techniques, or movements involving throwing, breaking the opponent's back, or blocking their arms are illegal. Muay Thai celebrates its own technical identity, and the inclusion of external techniques is seen as an attempt to distort the essence of the sport.

Attacking Fallen or Vulnerable Opponents

A fighter cannot attack an opponent who is falling, down, or trying to get up. This rule protects the safety of the competitor and upholds the ethics of fair combat.

Improper Use of the Ropes

Clinging to the ropes for an advantage, whether for offense or defense, is prohibited. Muay Thai values technical skill rather than the use of external resources.

Provocations

Verbal or gestural provocations during the fight are considered a violation of the rules. Mutual respect is central to Muay Thai, and actions aimed at emotionally destabilizing the opponent are penalized.

Disobedience to the Referee

Ignoring the referee's instructions is a direct violation of the rules. The referee is the highest authority in the ring, and their role is to ensure a fair and safe fight.

Strikes to the Groin Protector

Striking the opponent's groin protector with knees, whether intentionally or negligently, is a serious infraction.

Sanctions:

If the strike incapacitates the fighter, the referee may declare the attacker as the loser or decide on a "no decision."
The injured fighter may receive up to five minutes of recovery. If they cannot continue, the referee will make a similar decision.
If the injured fighter continues, the referee may warn or deduct points from the attacker.

Holding and Advancing

Causing imbalance by holding the opponent's leg and advancing more than two steps without delivering attacks is an illegal practice. After two warnings, points may be deducted.

Faking a Fall

When a fighter fakes a fall after having their leg captured, they are attempting to manipulate the referee's perception to gain an unfair advantage. This results in a warning or, in cases of recurrence, point deductions.

Delaying Return to Combat

If both fighters fall out of the ring and one intentionally delays returning to the fight, they will be violating the rules.

Prohibited Substances

The use of prohibited substances, as specified by the Muaythai, is strictly forbidden. Any violation results in severe punishments, including disqualification.

Other Violations

Any other action that violates the regulations established by the Muay Thai authorities may be considered an infraction and will be judged on a case-by-case basis.

These rules highlight Muay Thai's commitment to justice, safety, and mutual respect. The strict enforcement of these principles ensures that the sport remains a celebration of skill, discipline, and martial spirit.

KNOCKDOWN OR FALL

A "knockdown" or "fall" occurs when a fighter is attacked by their opponent's fist, foot, knee, or elbow, resulting in a situation where any part of the fighter's body, except their feet, touches the ring floor. It also includes situations where the fighter stands helplessly over the ring ropes, leans on them, or sits on them without the ability to defend themselves. Additionally, it encompasses instances where any part of the fighter's body or their entire body is out of the ring or stage area, or when the fighter withstands a series of serious blows without falling but is visibly unable to defend themselves.

When a knockdown occurs, the referee must wait for one second before beginning a loud and clear count from one to ten, with a one-second interval between each count. The referee must accompany the count with hand signals, ensuring the downed fighter is aware of the progression. If the downed fighter manages to stand up before the referee counts to ten and appears ready to continue, but the count has not yet reached eight, the referee will continue counting until eight before signaling to resume the bout. If the fighter stands up before the count of ten but falls again without further attacks from their opponent, the referee will continue the count from the last number.

If the referee completes the count to ten without the downed fighter standing and indicating readiness to continue, the fight is declared over, and the referee will announce the downed fighter's loss by knockout.

In cases where both fighters are knocked down simultaneously, the referee will continue counting as long as at least one fighter remains down. If neither fighter can stand by the count of ten, the fight is declared a draw. Should the fighters' arms or legs become entangled, or if one fighter is on top of the other while attempting to rise, the referee will stop the count to separate them before resuming the count if necessary. If a fighter is not ready to continue the bout immediately following the interval between rounds, the referee must begin the count, except when the delay is due to improper dressing or an issue with the ring or stage conditions.

This structured approach ensures fairness and safety in the ring, providing a clear framework for managing knockdowns during a bout. Each step is designed to protect the fighters while maintaining the integrity of the competition.

HANDSHAKES

Fighters must shake hands before the start of the first round and before the start of the final round, symbolizing that they will compete with sportsmanship and in accordance with the rules. This gesture is not merely a formality but represents mutual respect and acknowledgment that the fight is conducted within the principles of sportsmanship. The handshake also signifies both fighters' commitment to act with integrity and respect for the traditions of the sport. From the moment they shake hands, the fighters recognize not only the presence of their opponent but also the essence of Muay Thai as a competition that balances strength, technique, and honor.

THE ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE RING DOCTOR

In the fast-paced and physically demanding world of combat sports, the presence of a ring doctor is not just a necessity but a mandate to ensure the health and safety of the fighters. The ring doctor's duties encompass various critical responsibilities that require medical expertise, quick decision-making, and an unwavering commitment to the athletes' well-being. This chapter delves into the pivotal role of the ring doctor in professional combat sports, specifically within the framework of Muay Thai and boxing regulations.

The Constant Vigil

The ring doctor must remain seated at a designated location throughout the entirety of the competition, from the opening bout to the final bell. This position allows the doctor to have an unobstructed view of the ring, enabling them to observe and assess any signs of injury or distress in real time. Their uninterrupted presence underscores the importance of immediate medical intervention in combat sports.

Pre-Fight Physical Examinations

Before a fighter can step into the ring, they must pass a rigorous physical examination conducted by the ring doctor.

This evaluation ensures that the fighters are physically fit and free from any prohibited diseases or illnesses as outlined in the Boxing Sport Board's medical handbook. This pre-fight checkup is the first line of defense in safeguarding the fighters' health, aiming to minimize the risk of severe injuries during the competition.

Advisory Role

During a bout, the referee may consult the ring doctor for advice regarding a fighter's ability to continue. Whether it's a cut that might impair vision or signs of a concussion, the ring doctor's input can determine the outcome of the fight. Their expertise is crucial in ensuring that safety is prioritized over the continuation of the bout.

Emergency Intervention

When a fighter is rendered unconscious or sustains a severe injury during a match, the ring doctor is the only individual authorized to enter the ring immediately. If necessary, other personnel may join them, but only under the doctor's directive. This protocol ensures that medical assistance is both swift and organized, reducing the risk of further harm to the injured fighter.

Post-Fight Medical Care

After the final bell, the ring doctor's responsibilities extend to conducting thorough post-fight evaluations. Fighters are examined to assess their recovery needs and determine the mandatory rest period before they can compete again. These regulations are critical in preventing long-term injuries and ensuring proper recovery:
Five-round bouts: A mandatory rest period of at least 21 days.

Winner of a one-round bout: A minimum rest period of 7 days.

Winner of a three-round bout: A minimum rest period of 14 days.

Loser by knockout (KO) or technical knockout (TKO): A mandatory rest period of 30 days.

KO or TKO due to consecutive head blows: A mandatory rest period of 90 days, followed by a medical certification of fitness to compete.

Post-Rest Certification

After completing their rest period, fighters must undergo another medical examination and obtain certification from the ring doctor, affirming their fitness to return to competition. This step is essential to ensure that no lingering injuries or vulnerabilities jeopardize the fighter's health in subsequent bouts.

The ring doctor's role is one of immense responsibility and significance in combat sports. Their duties extend beyond the ring, encompassing pre-fight evaluations, in-ring emergencies, and post-fight care. By enforcing stringent medical standards and prioritizing fighter safety, the ring doctor acts as a guardian, ensuring that the spirit of competition does not come at the cost of an athlete's well-being. Their expertise and vigilance are the cornerstones of maintaining the integrity and safety of the sport.

DRUGS OR PROHIBITED SUBSTANCES

In the realm of combat sports, the integrity and safety of fighters are of paramount importance. To uphold these principles, it is strictly prohibited for any fighter to consume drugs or chemical substances that are not part of their usual dietary regimen. Such substances not only jeopardize the fairness of the competition but also pose significant risks to the fighter's health and well-being.

The list of prohibited substances for fighters is meticulously categorized and regulated in accordance with the governing body's rules, such as the Board of Boxing Sport regulations. These substances typically include performance-enhancing drugs, recreational drugs, and other chemicals deemed harmful or unfairly advantageous in the context of competition. Fighters, trainers, and officials must be thoroughly aware of and compliant with these regulations.

Any fighter found to have used a prohibited substance, or any individual responsible for providing such substances to a fighter, is subject to strict penalties under the law. These penalties may range from fines and suspensions to permanent bans from participation in the sport. The enforcement of these regulations is crucial to maintaining the credibility of the sport and ensuring a level playing field for all participants.

Furthermore, any fighter or official who violates these drug-related regulations will face additional disciplinary actions. This includes prohibition from participating in any future bouts or other boxing-related activities. Such measures are designed to serve as a deterrent and to reinforce the importance of ethical conduct in the sport.

A critical aspect of ensuring compliance with these rules is the mandatory medical checkup that fighters must undergo after a bout. Refusing to comply with this requirement constitutes a serious violation of the rules. Any fighter who refuses a post-bout medical examination will be banned from future competitions. Additionally, officials who encourage or facilitate such behavior will also face penalties, including disqualification from involvement in any boxing events.

The strict enforcement of these regulations underscores the commitment of the sport's governing bodies to prioritize the safety, fairness, and integrity of boxing. By adhering to these rules, fighters and officials alike contribute to the preservation of the sport's honorable tradition and its continued growth as a respected discipline worldwide.